

ANIMAL DISEASES AND HUMAN WELFARE

The New York Academy of Sciences has just published the papers presented at a conference on "The Relation of Diseases in the Lower Animals to Human Welfare," held at the Academy on March 15 and 16, 1946. (*Annals N. Y. Acad. Sci.*, Vol. XLVIII, Art. 6, p. 351-576, April, 1947.) Although most of these papers are concerned mainly with certain aspects of veterinary medicine, one in particular is of interest to medical entomologists. This is the paper entitled "The Prevention of Plague in the Light of Newer Knowledge" by K. F. Meyer of the University of California.

Doctor Meyer reviews the history of preventive measures and discusses the problem of sylvatic plague and its control. Numerous plague foci exist in the western part of the United States. It is believed that the plague bacillus was brought into the ports of San Francisco and Seattle by infected rats and eventually transferred to wild rodents. Some 38 species of wild rodents and rabbits have been found plague-infected in confined areas in California, Oregon, Washington, Montana, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado and Wyoming. According to Doctor Meyer the potentialities of these reservoirs of sylvatic plague are as yet unknown. It is still a mystery why human cases fail to develop when conditions in many localities appear to be so favorable. Only more research into the ecology of sylvatic plague will provide the answer. Doctor Meyer's paper is of unusual interest throughout and will repay a careful reading by entomologists who have assumed that the Black Death disappeared entirely after its outbreaks in the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries.—H. B. W.